

WHAT ARE CLAIMED ARE;

1. An electronic circulation method in order to circulate electronic units for sales promotion, or simply sales promotion points hereafter, comprising (a) a sales promotion point issuance and consumption means that issues and consumes sales promotion points per each shop, manufacturer or group of them and consumes sales promotion points within said each shop, manufacturer or group of them based on pre-determined point issuance conditions and pre-determined point consumption conditions in response to the requesting operation by a user on a terminal, and that manages said pre-determined issuance conditions, said pre-determined consumption conditions, the point issuance history and the point consumption history, and (b) a sales promotion point exchange transaction means that makes said sales promotion points circulate not only within said each shop, manufacturer or group of them but also widely outside said each shop, manufacturer or group of them, wherein said sales promotion point exchange transaction means (p) manages a standard value of a sales promotion point that is arbitrarily determined by said each shop, manufacturer or group of them and that is consumed within said each shop, manufacturer or group of them, (q) manages an exchange rate between sales promotion points that are issued by and consumed within each shop, manufacturer or group of them and sales promotion points that are consumed outside said each shop, manufacturer or group of them wherein said exchange rate is arbitrarily determined by said each shop, manufacturer or group of them, (r) and executes sales promotion exchange transaction by calculating the necessary point amount required for exchange to a commodity or a service that a user wants based on said standard value of a sales promotion point and on said exchange rate, in response to the user's request.
2. An electronic circulation method claimed in Claim 1, wherein said exchange rate between sales promotion points that are issued by and consumed within an each shop, manufacturer or group of them and sales promotion points that are consumed outside said each shop, manufacturer or group of them can be determined arbitrarily according to the shop or the manufacturer or the group of them that provides the commodity or the service, or according to the product or the service that are provided by the shop or the manufacturer or the group of them.
3. An electronic circulation method claimed in Claim 2, wherein said exchange

rate can be further flexibly determined according to time, a period or a season, and according to the attributes of the user who is a member of the sales promotion point exchange transaction service.

5 4. An electronic circulation method claimed in Claim 1, wherein said exchange rate can be changed at any time from an information input and output terminal of said sales promotion point issuance and consumption means, and the changed exchange rate is reflected on the exchange transaction of said sales promotion points on a real time base.

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5. An electronic circulation method claimed in Claim 1, wherein data of said sales promotion point exchange transaction are fed back to the shop, the manufacturer or the group of them that issued said sales promotion points.

15 6. An electronic circulation method claimed in Claim 1, wherein said requesting operation by a user on a terminal is an access operation to a home page on the Internet ordering a commodity or a prize.

20 7. An electronic circulation method claimed in Claim 6, wherein said sales promotion points include points that are given when an advertising home page or a banner is accessed by the user.

25 8. An electronic circulation system in order to circulate electronic units for sales promotion, or simply sales promotion points hereafter, comprising (a) a sales promotion point issuance and consumption means that issues and consumes sales promotion points per each shop, manufacturer or group of them and consumes sales promotion points within said each shop, manufacturer or group of them based on pre-determined point issuance conditions and pre-determined point consumption conditions in response to the requesting operation by a user on a terminal, and that manages said pre-determined issuance conditions, said pre-determined consumption conditions, the point issuance history and the point consumption history, and (b) a sales promotion point exchange transaction means that makes said sales promotion points circulate not only within said each shop, manufacturer or group of them but also widely outside said each shop, manufacturer or group of them, wherein said sales promotion point exchange transaction means (p) manages a standard value of a sales promotion point that is arbitrarily determined by said each shop, manufacturer or group of them and that

is consumed within said each shop, manufacturer or group of them, (q) manages an exchange rate between sales promotion points that are issued by and consumed within each shop, manufacturer or group of them and sales promotion points that are consumed outside said each shop, manufacturer or group of them
5 wherein said exchange rate is arbitrarily determined by said each shop, manufacturer or group of them, (r) and executes sales promotion exchange transaction by calculating the necessary point amount required for exchange to a commodity or a service that a user wants based on said standard value of a sales promotion point and on said exchange rate, in response to the user's request.

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9. An electronic circulation system claimed in Claim 8, wherein said exchange rate between sales promotion points that are issued by and consumed within an each shop, manufacturer or group of them and sales promotion points that are consumed outside said each shop, manufacturer or group of them can be determined arbitrarily according to the shop or the manufacturer or the group of them that provides the commodity or the service, or according to the product or the service that are provided by the shop or the manufacturer or the group of them.

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10. An electronic circulation system claimed in Claim 9, wherein said exchange rate can be further flexibly determined according to time, a period or a season, and according to the attributes of the user who is a member of the sales promotion point exchange transaction service.

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11. An electronic circulation system claimed in Claim 8, wherein said exchange rate can be changed at any time from an information input and output terminal of said sales promotion point issuance and consumption means, and the changed exchange rate is reflected on the exchange transaction of said sales promotion points on a real time base.

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12. An electronic circulation system claimed in Claim 8, containing a procedure that displays on a user terminal the estimated user's present point value based on the consumption conditions including said exchange rate, and that enables for a user referring to said user's present point value displayed on the user terminal to input manually, or to specify automatic calculation of, the point value required for exchanging to a commodity or a service.

13. An electronic circulation system claimed in Claim 8, wherein data of said sales promotion point exchange transaction are fed back to the shop, manufacturer or the group of them that issued said sales promotion points.

5 14. An electronic circulation system claimed in Claim 8, wherein said requesting operation by a user on a terminal is an access operation to a home page on the Internet ordering a commodity or a prize.

10 15. An electronic circulation system claimed in Claim 14, wherein said sales promotion points include points that are given when an advertising home page or a banner is accessed by the user.

15 16. A memory media used in the electronic circulation method in order to circulate electronic units for sales promotion claimed in claim 1 or used in the electronic circulation system in order to circulate electronic units for sales promotion claimed in claim 8 in which an executable program so that said sales promotion point exchange transaction means manages a standard value of a sales promotion point that is arbitrarily determined by said each shop, manufacturer or group of them and that is consumed within said each shop, manufacturer or group of them, manages an exchange rate between sales promotion points that are issued by and consumed within an each shop, manufacturer or group of them and sales promotion points that are consumed outside said each shop, manufacturer or group of them wherein said exchange rate is arbitrarily determined by said each shop, manufacturer or group of them, and executes sales promotion exchange transaction by calculating the necessary point amount required for exchange to a commodity or a service that a user wants based on said standard value of a sales promotion point and on said exchange rate, in response to the user's request.

20 25 30 35 17. A memory media used in the electronic circulation method in order to circulate electronic units for sales promotion claimed in claim 1 or used in the electronic circulation system in order to circulate electronic units for sales promotion claimed in claim 8 in which an executable program in order to enable said exchange rate to be changed at any time from an information input and output terminal of said sales promotion point issuance and consumption means, and in order to enable said changed exchange rate to be reflected on the exchange transaction of said sales promotion points on a real time base.

18. A memory media claimed in Claim 17 in which an executable program that
enables to display on a user terminal the estimated user's present point value
based on the consumption conditions including said exchange rate, and that
5 enables for a user referring to said user's present point value displayed on the
user terminal to input manually, or to specify automatic calculation of, the point
value required for exchanging to a commodity or a service, is stored.

10 19. An electronic circulation method claimed in Claim 1, wherein said sales
promotion points can be used by a user as a participation ticket for a gaming
home page or for a quiz home page provided on the Internet, and the prize for
winning the game or for answering the quiz is paid back to the user in the form of
said sales promotion points.

15 20. An electronic circulation system claimed in Claim 8, wherein said sales
promotion points can be used by a user as a participation ticket for a gaming
home page or for a quiz home page provided on the Internet, and the prize for
winning the game or for answering the quiz is paid back to the user in the form of
said sales promotion points.

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